

What is claimed is:

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1. A message transmitting and receiving apparatus comprising:
 - 5 memory means for storing a keyword and a degree of importance of said keyword;
 - detector means for detecting an occurrence of a message;
 - extractor means for extracting a keyword from a received message; and
- 10 importance determiner means for determining a degree of importance of a keyword.
2. The apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising means for providing at least one of visual and audio indications of an occurrence of said extracted keyword in a manner determined by a degree of importance of said extracted keyword.
- 15 3. The apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising means for deleting a keyword having a degree of importance lower than a threshold value.
- 20 4. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said extractor means further stores a new keyword extracted from a received message in said memory means together with a degree of importance of said new keyword.
- 25 5. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said extractor means extracts also a candidate keyword from a received message, and said apparatus further comprises register means for storing in said memory means, a candidate keyword as a keyword, together with a degree of importance of the candidate keyword, when a user of the apparatus responds to received message data containing the candidate keyword within a predetermined range.
- 30 35 6. The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

7. The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines

5 8. The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

9. The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

10 10. The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

15 11. The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

20 12. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means determines a degree of importance of a keyword stored in said memory means, depending on whether or not a user of the apparatus has responded to a received message containing said keyword.

25 13. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means determines a degree of importance of a keyword stored in said memory means, depending on whether or not a user of the apparatus has responded to a received message containing said keyword within a predetermined range.

30 14. The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

15. The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

35 16. The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

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17. The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

18. The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said
5 predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

19. The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

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20. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means changes a degree of importance of a keyword for a predetermined time period after an occurrence of a transmitted message from a user of the apparatus.

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21. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means lowers a degree of importance of a keyword for a predetermined time period after an occurrence of a transmitted message from a user of the apparatus.

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22. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means changes a degree of importance of a keyword during a time period when a user of the apparatus is operating an input device of the apparatus and during a predetermined time period after the user stops operating the input device.

23. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means lowers a degree of importance of a keyword during a time period when a user of the apparatus is operating an input device of the apparatus and during a predetermined time period after the user stops operating the input device.

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24. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means determines a degree of importance of a keyword according to schedule data of a user of the apparatus.

25. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means raises a degree of importance of a keyword according to schedule data of a user of the apparatus.

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26. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means sets, in accordance with a time period, a keyword and a degree of importance thereof designated by a user of said apparatus, the degree of importance of said keyword effective during said time period.

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27. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means determines a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with the number of occurrences of the keyword in a predetermined range of received message data.

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28. The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

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29. The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

30. The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

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31. The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

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32. The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

35. The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

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34. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means lowers a degree of importance of a

keyword when the number of occurrences of the keyword in received message data within a predetermined time period exceeds a predetermined number.

5 35. The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner means determines a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with an attribute of a received message containing the keyword.

10 36. The apparatus according to Claim 35 wherein the attribute of said received message is a network, a channel or a client

15 37. A message transmitting and receiving apparatus comprising:

memory means for storing a keyword and a degree of importance of said keyword;

detector means for detecting an occurrence of a message;

extractor means for extracting a keyword from a received message; and

means for providing at least one of visual and audio indications of an occurrence of said extracted keyword in a manner determined by a degree of importance of said extracted keyword.

25 38. A program stored on a recording medium for transmitting and receiving messages, said program being for use in an information processing apparatus, said information processing apparatus including a processor and memory means, said program causing said processor to perform the steps of:

30 detecting an occurrence of a message;

extracting a keyword from a received message;

determining a degree of importance of a keyword; and

storing a keyword and a degree of importance of the keyword in said memory means.

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39. The program according to Claim 38 further causing said processor to perform the step of providing at least one of visual and

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audio indications of an occurrence of said extracted keyword in a manner determined by a degree of importance of said extracted keyword.

5 40. The program according to Claim 38 further causing said processor to perform the step of deleting a keyword having a degree of importance lower than a given threshold value.

10 41. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of extracting includes storing, in said memory means, a new keyword extracted from a received message, together with a degree of importance thereof.

15 42. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of extracting includes also extracting a candidate keyword from a received message, and said program further causes said processor to perform the step of storing, in said memory means, a candidate keyword as a keyword, together with a degree of importance thereof, when a user of the apparatus has responded to received message data containing the candidate keyword within a predetermined range.

20 43. The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

25 44. The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

30 45. The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

35 46. The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

47. The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

48. The program according to Claim 42 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

5 49. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance determines a degree of importance of a keyword stored in said memory means, depending on whether or not a user of the apparatus has responded to a received message containing said keyword within a predetermined 10 range.

50. The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

15 51. The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

52. The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

20 53. The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

25 54. The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

55. The program according to Claim 49 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

30 56. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword, depending on whether or not a user of the apparatus has responded to a received message containing said 35 keyword.

57. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of

determining a degree of importance includes changing a degree of importance of a keyword for a predetermined time period after an occurrence of a transmitted message from a user of the apparatus.

5 58. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes lowering a degree of importance of a keyword for a predetermined time period after an occurrence of a transmitted message from a user of the apparatus.

10 59. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes changing a degree of importance of a keyword during a time period when a user of the apparatus is operating an input device of the apparatus and during a predetermined time period after the user stops operating the input device.

15 60. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes lowering a degree of importance of a keyword during a time period when a user of the apparatus is operating an input device of the apparatus and during a predetermined time period after the user stops operating the input device.

20 61. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword according to schedule data of a user of the apparatus.

25 62. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes raising a degree of importance of a keyword according to schedule data of a user of the apparatus.

30 63. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes setting, in accordance with a time period, a keyword and a degree of importance thereof designated by a user of said apparatus, the degree of importance of

said keyword effective during said time period.

64. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with the number of occurrences of the keyword in a predetermined range of received message data.

65. The program according to Claim 64 wherein said
10 predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

66. The program according to Claim 64 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

15 67. The program according to Claim 64 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

68. The program according to Claim 64 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

20 69. The program according to Claim 64 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

70. The program according to Claim 64 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client

71. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes lowering a degree of importance of a keyword when the number of occurrences of the keyword in received message data within a predetermined time period exceeds a predetermined number.

72. The program according to Claim 38 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with an attribute of a received message containing the keyword.

73. The program according to Claim 38 wherein the attribute of said received message is a network, a channel or a client.

5 74. A program stored on a recording medium for transmitting and receiving messages, said program being for use in an information processing apparatus, said information processing apparatus including a processor and memory means, said program causing said processor to perform the steps of:

10 storing a keyword and a degree of importance thereof in said memory means;

detecting an occurrence of a message;

extracting a keyword from a received message; and

15 providing at least one of visual and audio indications of an occurrence of said extracted keyword.

75. A method for processing a keyword in a message transmitting and receiving system, comprising the steps of:

20 detecting an occurrence of a message;

extracting a keyword from a received message;

determining a degree of importance of a keyword; and

storing a keyword and a degree of importance thereof in memory means.

25 76. The method according to Claim 75 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance determines a degree of importance of a keyword stored in said memory means, depending on whether or not a user of the system has responded to a received message containing said keyword within a predetermined range.

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77. The method according to Claim 75 wherein said step of determining a degree of importance includes setting, in accordance with a time period, a keyword and a degree of importance thereof designated by a user of said apparatus, the degree of importance of said keyword effective during said time period.

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78. The method according to Claim 75 wherein said step of

determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with an attribute of a received message containing the keyword.

5 79. A method for processing a keyword in a message transmitting and receiving system, comprising the steps of;
 storing a keyword and a degree of importance thereof in said memory means;
 detecting an occurrence of a message;
10 extracting a keyword from a received message; and
 providing at least one of visual and audio indications of an occurrence of said extracted keyword.

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